AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A surface modification method comprising

bringing, into a high-temperature flame formed by use of a combustible gas and a combustion-supporting gas,

inorganic oxide powder A having an average particle size falling within a range of 0.5 to 200 μm as measured by means of laser diffraction/scattering particle size analysis and

inorganic oxide powder B having a particle size calculated on the basis of its BET specific surface area (hereinafter may be referred to simply as "BET-based particle size") of 100 nm or less,

to thereby modify the surfaces of particles of the powder A by means of particles of the powder B.

2. (original): A surface modification method comprising

bringing, into a high-temperature flame formed by use of a combustible gas and a combustion-supporting gas, inorganic oxide powder A having an average particle size falling within a range of 0.5 to 200 μm as measured by means of laser diffraction/scattering particle size analysis; and

bringing again the resultant powder into a high-temperature flame formed by use of a combustible gas and a combustion-supporting gas,

to thereby modify the surfaces of particles of powder A.

3. (currently amended): The surface modification method according to claim ~~1 or~~ 2, wherein the combustible gas is any species selected from among methane, ethane, propane, ethylene, propylene, acetylene, butane, LPG, hydrogen, and carbon monoxide; or a gas mixture thereof.

4. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to ~~any one of claims 1 through 3~~claim 2, wherein the high-temperature flame is formed by a coaxial triple-tube burner having an innermost tube, an intermediate tube and an outermost tube, in which the powder or powders are passed through the innermost tube, a combustible gas is passed through the intermediate tube and a combustion-supporting gas is passed through the outermost tube.

5. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to claim 2~~any one of claims 1 through 4~~, wherein powder A and an organic oxide powder B are sprayed into the flame together, optionally with a carrier gas.

6. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to claim 2~~any one of claims 1 through 5~~, wherein powder A comprises particles of an oxide of Al, Mg, Ca, Ti, or Si, or particles of a mixed crystal of such oxides.

7. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to claim 2~~any one of claims 1 through 6~~, wherein a powder B is brought into the flame and comprises particles of an oxide of Al, Ti, or Si, or particles of a mixed crystal of such oxides.

8. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to claim 6~~ or 7~~, wherein powder A comprises particles having a spherical degree of at least 0.7 as defined by the following formula [1]:

spherical degree = (the circumference of a circle having the same area as that of a projection image of a particle)/(the length of the contour of the projection image of the particle) · · · · · [1].

9. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to claim 7~~any one of claims 6 through 8~~, wherein the BET-based particle size of powder B is 1/10 or less the average particle size of powder A as measured by means of laser diffraction/scattering particle size analysis.

10. (currently amended) The surface modification method according to ~~any one of claims 6 through 9~~claim 7, wherein the amount of powder A is 50 mass% to 99 mass% inclusive on the basis of the total mass of powder A and powder B.

11. (withdrawn - currently amended) A powder obtained through a surface modification method as recited in claim 6~~any one of claims 6 through 10~~, which has an average

particle size of 0.5 μm to 250 μm as measured by means of laser diffraction/scattering particle size analysis.

12. (withdrawn) The powder according to claim 11, which comprises particles having a spherical degree of at least 0.7 as defined by formula [1] described in claim 8.

13. (withdrawn - currently amended) The powder according to claim 11 ~~or 12~~, which has undergone surface treatment by use of an agent for imparting hydrophobicity to the surface of the powder.

14. (withdrawn - currently amended) An organic polymer composition characterized by comprising an organic polymer and the powder as recited in claim 11 ~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~ in an amount of 0.01 mass% to 90 mass% on the basis of the entire mass of the composition.

15. (withdrawn - currently amended) A silicon-containing polymer composition characterized by comprising a silicon-containing polymer and the powder as recited in claim 11 ~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~ in an amount of 0.01 mass% to 90 mass% on the basis of the entire mass of the composition.

16. (withdrawn) An organic polymer composition according to claim 14, wherein the organic polymer of the composition is at least one resin selected from the group consisting of a synthetic thermoplastic resin, a synthetic thermosetting resin, and a natural resin.

17. (withdrawn - currently amended) The organic polymer composition or silicon-containing polymer composition according to claim 14~~any one of claims 14 through 16~~, which is in the form of a compound.

18. (withdrawn - currently amended) The organic polymer composition or silicon-containing polymer composition according to claim 14~~any one of claims 14 through 16~~, which is in the form of a masterbatch.

19. (withdrawn - currently amended) A molded product characterized by being formed through molding of the organic polymer composition or silicon-containing polymer composition as recited in claim 14~~any one of claims 14 through 18~~.

20. (withdrawn - currently amended) A slurry characterized by comprising the powder as recited in claim 11~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

21. (withdrawn - currently amended) A coating agent characterized by comprising the powder as recited in claim 11~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

22. (withdrawn - currently amended) A coating material characterized by comprising the powder as recited in claim 18~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

23. (withdrawn - currently amended) A structure characterized by comprising, on its surface, the powder as recited in claim 11~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

24. (withdrawn) The structure according to claim 23, wherein said structure is one selected from the group consisting of building materials, machinery, vehicles, glass products, electric appliances, agricultural materials, electronic apparatus, tools, tableware, bath products, toiletry products, furniture, clothing, cloth products, fibers, leather products, paper products, sporting goods, futon, containers, eyeglasses, signboards, piping, wiring, brackets, sanitary materials, automobile parts, outdoor goods, stockings, socks, gloves, and masks.

25. (withdrawn - currently amended) A luminescent material comprising the powder as recited in claim 11~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

26. (withdrawn - currently amended) A cosmetic composition comprising the powder as recited in claim 11~~any one of claims 11 through 13~~.

27. (withdrawn) The cosmetic composition according to claim 26, further comprising at least one selected from the group consisting of an oil, a whitening agent, a humectant, an anti-aging agent, an emollient, an extract, an anti-inflammatory agent, an

antioxidant, a surfactant, a chelating agent, an antibacterial agent, a preservative, an amino acid, a sugar, an organic acid, an alcohol, an ester, fat and oil, a hydrocarbon, an anti-UV agent, and an inorganic powder.

28. (withdrawn - currently amended) A method for producing a powder, which comprises a method as recited in claim 2~~any one of claims 1 through 9~~.